

Title: “Establishing and maintaining rapport in investigative interviews of traumatized victims: A qualitative study”

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Abstract

The study aim was to explore the factors considered important and useful in facilitating safety and building rapport in police investigative interviews with traumatized interviewees. We conducted 21 semi-structured interviews of police investigators involved in investigative interviewing of victims after the Utøya massacre on 22 July 2011 in Norway. Using a thematic analysis based on a reflexive hermeneutic-phenomenological epistemology, four themes emerged: (1) Preparation through planning, reflection, and openness: balancing knowing and being receptive; (2) Using first impressions, casual conversation and communicating expectations to make the interviewee comfortable; (3) Getting closer to the experience of the interviewee through engagement, adaptation, and understanding; and (4) Handling negative feelings and being receptive in the interview relationship. We discuss the findings in relation to current theory and research on investigative interviewing and highlight the importance of working on an emotional level to facilitate rapport when interviewing traumatized interviewees.

Keywords: police interview, investigative interview, rapport, trauma, Utoya

1. Introduction

The field of police science aims to explain and acquire knowledge about police work that can be generalized and applied to different contexts (Jaschke, Bjørge, Romero, Mawby, & Pagon, 2007), such as the investigation of a criminal offence. In police investigations, the aim is to answer two primary questions: ‘what happened?’ and ‘who did it?’ (Milne & Bull, 2006). One method of obtaining information to answer these questions is to interview witnesses, victims, and suspects. However, due to the nature of their work, police investigators often encounter individuals who experience a variety of emotional states and psychological needs that must be managed for the interviewee to provide a detailed account. Traumatized witnesses and victims of crime are one such group. How do police interviewers approach a traumatized person to facilitate an atmosphere of safety and build rapport? We addressed this important issue through qualitative, explorative interviews of police officers who interviewed victims following the 2011 massacre on Utøya Island, Norway.

1.1 Background to the study

On 22 July 2011, at the traditional summer youth camp of Norway’s Labour Party on Utøya Island, the perpetrator—posing as a policeman—went on a shooting spree that led him to kill 69 and injure another 56 of the 564 people present on the island. Exposure to trauma may involve experiences of fear, horror, or helplessness, and dissociative symptoms of acute stress that place the individual at risk for developing symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Brewin, Andrews, Rose, & Kirk, 1999; Brewin, Andrews, & Valentine, 2000; Ozer, Best, Lipsey, & Weiss, 2008). PTSD involves symptoms such as heightened arousal and reactivity (e.g., irritable behavior), intrusive experiences (e.g., reliving the experience),

behavioral avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma, and negative alternations in cognition and mood (e.g., inability to recall key features of the traumatic event, or, experiencing strong negative emotions such as fear, guilt, or shame) (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). A study of the post-traumatic stress reactions of 325 Utøya survivors conducted 4–5 months after 22 July showed that they reported post-traumatic stress levels more than six times higher than in the general population, and that 47% reported clinical levels of PTSD (Dyb et al., 2014; Glad, Aadnanes, & Dyb, 2012), reflecting the severity and impact of what happened on 22 July. The Utøya terrorist attack was a severe and tragic incident. Many young people lost their lives and a whole country was in grief. The incident also had victims who survived the attack and police investigators who had a job to do.

In Norway, police students are trained in the Police University College's model of investigative interviewing (Bjerknes & Johansen, 2009). Investigators also have the opportunity to gain further education through the one-week national investigative interviewing training program, KREATIV (Fahsing & Rachlew, 2009; Rachlew & Fahsing, 2015; Riksadvokaten, 2013). Both these programs of training aim to qualify the candidate to plan, conduct, document and evaluate interviews. They are based on the theory, principles and phases of PEACE, the well acknowledged British police training package in investigative interviewing (Clarke & Milne, 2001; Milne & Bull, 1999; Milne, Shaw, & Bull, 2007). It should be noted that training in Norway does not generally include any specific training for interviewing traumatized individuals. The acronym PEACE represents the five phases of the interview; Planning and Preparation, Engage and Explain, Account, Closure, and Evaluation. Rapport is part of the Engage and Explain phase where the aim is to explain to the interviewee the purpose of the interview and build a working relationship that contributes to the interviewee providing information about what happened (Griffiths & Milne, 2006; Milne

& Bull, 1999).

Investigative interviewing is one of the most effective tools for obtaining accurate, complete, and detailed interviewee accounts (Milne & Powell, 2010). However, forensic interviewing of traumatized persons should be carried out with caution as victims of crime often experience extreme challenges to their existing repertoire of coping strategies and psychological equilibrium (Green, Choi, & Kane, 2010). The interviewee may experience strong or chaotic emotions that are difficult to control or regulate, and consequently feel overwhelmed. For instance, the interviewee may be subjected to painful sadness that may cause him/her to be reticent, or, he/she may experience agitation and intrusive thoughts making it difficult to concentrate and communicate. Post-traumatic reactions often include experiences of anxiety that influence cognitive processes such as attention and working memory (Derakshan & Eysenck, 2009), reducing the interviewees' ability to do a thorough search of memory of what happened (Kieckhaefer, Vallano, & Compo, 2014). This creates a challenging situation for the police interviewer who must accommodate and adapt to the state of the interviewee in order to facilitate rapport and achieve investigative aims. For instance, the police's requirement for detailed information after the event may conflict with the kind of support traumatized persons need in the time following an incident (Jakobsen, Langballe, & Schultz, 2016). Additionally, interviewing traumatized interviewees can also be emotionally demanding for the police interviewer and, thus, represent a potential strain to his/her health and well-being (Bakker & Heuven, 2006).

Even though interviewing traumatized interviewees represents a challenge for police interviewers, it is important to acknowledge how the interview context also represents an opportunity for therapeutic jurisprudence, that is, how the legal system, legal processes and

legal actors have an impact on the individual's psychological health and wellbeing. It is about how the law functions as a social force that have consequences that can be therapeutic or anti-therapeutic (Madsen & Holmberg, 2015; Petrucci, Winick, & Wexler, 2003; Winick, 2002). For instance, if the police interviewer is able to minimize the interviewees' experience of distress in the process of achieving investigative aims. In relation to the Utøya massacre, Langballe and Schultz (2017) studied how the victims of the attack experienced the police interviews, and, what factors might lead to positive experiences or increased stress. The study found that 73% of the participants reported the investigative interview was not stressful or stressful only to a small degree. Seventeen percent reported the investigative interview as 'partly stressful', whilst 10% perceived the interview as stressful to a 'large extent.' It was also noted that 27.4% reported the interview as a negative experience but, at the same time, 88.2% reported to have experienced being listened to and understood. The participants that reported the investigative interview as a positive situation experienced that they 1) were able to present a coherent narrative, 2) perceived the police as empathetic and professional, and, 3) considered the interview as meaningful, showing the significance of managing trauma in police interviews.

1.2 Rapport

Rapport concerns the social influence of the interviewer, how he or she approaches the interviewee to develop a relational context that makes the individual feel comfortable, maximizes his or her cognitive resources (e.g. access to memories), and provides a detailed account. Tickle-Degnen and Rosenthal (1990) have provided a theoretical framework describing the nature of rapport. They describe the concept as consisting of three essential,

interrelating components: 1) mutual attentiveness (shared interest and degree of involvement in the interaction), 2) positivity (mutual friendliness and care in the relationship with the other), and 3) coordination (the balance, harmony or smoothness of the interaction). In their conceptual analysis of the concept, Vanderhallen, Vervaeke, and Holmberg (2011) suggest that rapport consists of a relationship that provides warmth, is harmonious and natural, offers trust, and stimulates co-operation. In order to build rapport, according to the training in Norway, the interviewer should work towards establishing a context that facilitates communication. To do this, the interviewer should give a good first impression, engage in casual conversation to initiate communication, and inform the interviewee about the relevant rules and regulations as well as the interview background, purpose, format and process. The interviewer should ask the interviewee if he/she has any questions or needs, show empathy and understanding for the interviewees' state, prepare the interviewee that he/she might have to ask unpleasant questions, and work towards establishing a climate of safety and trust (Bjerknes & Johansen, 2009).

Even though research on rapport in investigative interviewing of adult witnesses and victims is scarce, there has been progress in the field more recently. Holmberg (2004a) examined how victims of rape and aggravated assault perceived the style, attitudes and responses of the police interviewer in their respective investigative interview. The study showed the victims' experience of two police interviewing styles: the dominant and the humanitarian approach. The dominant style was characterized by the interviewer being perceived as impatient, aggressive, rushed, brusque, condemning and unfriendly, whilst the humanitarian approach was perceived as accommodating, engaging, positive, empathetic, cooperative, helpful, friendly and obliging. The results of the study showed that the dominant approach and responses of anxiety was significantly associated with crime victims' omission

of information. In contrast, the humanitarian interviewing style was significantly related to the victims providing more information in their narratives. As stated by Holmberg (2004b, p. 41): “... a humanitarian interviewing style promotes rapport building through its underlying notions of empathy and a personalizing approach, ...” Such an approach has been found to have a positive impact on the development of a working alliance with interviewees (Vanderhallen et al., 2011), the amount of information generated and the interviewees’ personal well-being (Holmberg & Madsen, 2014; Madsen & Holmberg, 2015).

Furthermore, a few studies (Collins, Lincoln, & Frank, 2002; Kieckhaefer et al., 2014; Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2015) have experimentally examined the influence of rapport with findings indicating that rapport building is beneficial to witness recall, that rapport reduces witness anxiety, and, if post-event information is given, the timing of rapport building is important and does influence eyewitness memory. Even though these studies have showed positive results with regard to the benefits of rapport, the need for more research on forensic rapport is acknowledged (Abbe & Brandon, 2013; Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2015). There is also a need for more research on investigative interviewing pertaining to the variety of different contexts the police may encounter (Westera & Powell, 2016), such as the interviewing of individuals who have experienced a traumatic and emotionally-charged event.

1.3 The present study

There is no consensus definition of rapport in investigative interviewing (Abbe & Brandon, 2013, 2014; Kieckhaefer et al., 2014; Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2015). Nevertheless, based on previous theory and research on how to facilitate communication in order to reach investigative aims, in the current study we define rapport as *a goal-oriented working*

relationship based on a shared social and emotional understanding between interviewer and interviewee. This definition is our theoretical point of departure which contributed to shape the development of the research as well as influencing our interpretations in the analysis. So, how do police interviewers approach traumatized interviewees to develop rapport? To explore this issue, we conducted interviews of police investigators who interviewed victims after the Utøya Island massacre to examine the following research questions; (1) What do the investigative interviewers consider important and useful when aiming to facilitate an atmosphere of safety in an investigative interview?; and (2) What do the investigative interviewers consider important and useful in establishing and maintaining rapport with a traumatized interviewee?

2. Methodological approach

We conducted semi-structured interviews to address the research questions, in which we used terms and concepts from the participants' interview training (e.g. the Norwegian police terminology used for 'rapport', 'interviewees', the different phases of the interview, etc) to guide and sensitize us to the first-person perspective of the police interviewer. We employed a thematic analysis based on a reflexive hermeneutic-phenomenological epistemology to investigate the research interviews (Binder, Holgersen, & Moltu, 2012). This approach allows data to develop in the relationship between exploration of the participants' views and the researcher's interpretative acts. Employing a reflexive approach includes taking into consideration how the subjectivity, preconceptions and interpretations of the researchers have an impact on the research process (Finlay & Gough, 2003). In the analysis, the utterances of the participants were assigned codes that were grouped. We then searched for meaning

patterns within these groups that could be formulated as key thematic categories relevant to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

2.1 Ethics

The study was approved by the Oslo Police District Deputy Chief of Police and the Norwegian Social Sciences Data Services. Because the investigative interview process itself may have put the investigators working on the Utøya case at risk of developing secondary traumatization, we incorporated a briefing session at the beginning, and a debriefing at the end of each research interview.

2.2 Researchers

Our backgrounds and preconceptions mainly derive from practical work and academic research within the fields of forensic and clinical psychology, which represents our main perspectives on, and approaches to, the development and interpretation of material. The first author is a Teacher in Police Studies and has nine years of clinical experience. The second author is a Professor of Clinical Psychology with 20 years of experience. The third author is a Professor of Forensic Psychology with 20 years of experience. All authors share an interest in experiential research and clinical phenomena related to vulnerable states and relational processes.

2.3 Participants

The study employed a purposeful sampling approach where we recruited participants by asking police investigation leaders in different districts in Norway to nominate potential candidates. The number of investigators who declined to participate is unknown; 21 participants from 13 locations wished to participate. The inclusion criteria were that the investigator had (1) completed the national interview training programme KREATIV (so the participants would have the same educational background), and (2) conducted at least one investigative interview with an adult (over 16 years old) in the Utøya case. All the participants of the study but one, who had interviewed youths aged 14–16, met both criteria. Participants were nine men and 12 women. Most of the investigative interviews conducted by the participants were carried out in the first weeks and months following the 22 July, although a few were as late as December 2011. The participants interviewed approximately 150–170 victims in the Utøya case (constituting approximately 30% of all the interviews that took place).

2.4 Data collection

The development of our interview guide followed Kvale and Brinkmann's (2009) guidelines, emphasizing a phenomenological generation of data aiming to explore experiences from a first-person perspective (Lavery 2003). Prior to the interviews, we gave the participants information about the purpose of the study emphasising that this is an explorative study of police interviewers' views of rapport in the Utøya investigative interviews. We also included the main questions we would ask so that the participant could prepare for the interview. The interviews were thematically divided into two parts: the first focused on interviewing

traumatized interviewees in general and the second targeted the Utøya case specifically.

Examples of questions in the interview guide are: Can you tell me about one particular time when you have experienced establishing rapport in an investigative interview? When rapport is established, what do you do to maintain it? What do you think of the concept 'rapport'? What was your experience of establishing rapport in the Utøya interviews? Did you find that establishing rapport in the Utøya interviews was different from how you established rapport in other interviews? Did you experience any difficulties with rapport during this interview (in the Utøya case)?

We used two pilot interviews of experienced investigators to evaluate the usefulness of the interview guide. The first author carried out and transcribed every interview, and has experience from interviewing both as a clinician and from working on three previous interview-based research projects. The research interviews were audio recorded and conducted between February and September 2013 at (or near) the participants' workplaces. The average interview duration was 56.7 minutes (range = 31–82 minutes; SD = 12.6 minutes).

2.5 Data analysis

To investigate the research questions, we employed an explorative reflexive, thematic analysis (Binder et al., 2012). This approach allows data to develop in the interplay between experiential exploration of the interview experience and the transcripts, as well as reflexivity and interpretations of the material (Finlay, 2003; Laverly, 2003; Smith, 2007). Our aim was to identify meaning patterns formulated as themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and we used quotations from the interview data considered relevant to the research questions to explain the

content of the themes and to be transparent in the research process (Binder et al., 2012; Sandelowski & Leeman, 2012). In the analysis process, we went through four main steps;

- (1) Immediately after each interview, impressions of the interview process were written down in a journal by the first author to obtain a basic understanding of the participants' views towards promoting reflexive awareness (e.g. impressions of tendencies in the participant's response pattern in relation to the research questions, reflections on own preconceptions in relation to the descriptions provided by the participants).
- (2) We used NVivo 10 (QSR, 2012) to organize and analyse the transcribed data. The first author examined the transcripts and assigned meaning codes for separable content units. These were later reviewed together with the second author to form an inter-observational agreement between meaning codes and the material. For instance, we placed the following quote from one of the participants under the content unit 'Facilitating safety': *"I tried to prepare myself emotionally and think 'this is my job'; I should get the account and ensure that they feel the safety I talked about earlier. They come here and testify and... yeah, preparing the ground for them."* Other examples of meaning codes are 'Showing openness'; 'Interviewer preparations'; and 'Relational ruptures'.
- (3) Meaning codes were interpreted and grouped to capture important aspects of the participants' experiences. For instance, the meaning codes 'Interviewer preparations' and 'Showing openness' was grouped together due to associative relevance. The first and second authors summarized and formulated these groups as themes. "A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of *patterned* response or meaning

within the data set” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 10). For instance, the units connected to the meaning code ‘Showing openness’ were organized under the theme ‘Preparation through planning, reflection, and openness: balancing knowing and being receptive’.

- (4) The original data were re-examined independently by all authors to form a consensus on themes and to evaluate whether units or themes should be modified or added. We did not add any units but a few themes were renamed and restructured. The findings are presented as themes considered important in relation to the research questions.

The issues of trustworthiness and verification were subject to guidelines outlined by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), including a reflexive evaluation of the research process to enhance transparency and trustworthiness of the study. This includes an acknowledgement of the researcher’s own pre-understandings and reflexivity on the development and interpretation of data (Stige, Malterud, & Midtgarden, 2009)

3. Findings

In the research interviews, we asked participants about processes related to facilitating rapport with traumatized interviewees in general and about building rapport in the Utøya interviews in particular. The participants described how the psychological processes did not differ, but how the severity of the Utøya case made a difference, making them more mindful of their approach. The analysis was based upon material pertaining both to investigative interviews in general and specifically to the Utøya incident, with an emphasis on the latter. The findings clustered around the four themes in relation to the research questions. In presenting the

findings, 'several of the participants' refers to three to seven (approximately 15-30 %) of the 21 participants, 'many' refer to eight to twelve (40-55 %), and 'most' refer to more than twelve (>60 %). Each theme will be examined in turn and described in the following sections.

3.1 Preparation through planning, reflection, and openness: balancing knowing and being receptive

The first theme concerns how the participants experienced preparatory efforts essential to establishing rapport. Most of the participants described that they prepared by obtaining knowledge about the content and documents of the case, the relevant legal provisions, the purpose of the interview, and the investigator's tasks. In other words, factors important for determining the quality of the investigative work. When preparing for an interview, many of the participants described incorporating an outline of how the interview should be structured and carried out as an important part of planning the interview. Additionally, several of the participants emphasized the importance of preparing psychologically to meet the person in question by choosing an approach for the interview on the basis of an obtained impression or information concerning the interviewee. For example, by using knowledge concerning the interviewee in the preparation, as expressed by the following participant:

... what kind of people we get in, you prepare for them with regard to what approach you choose. And then you might... these girls who are 16 or 17, you have to spend more time being careful, because they're in that age group,... (Participant 2)

The experience of being prepared for an investigative interview is described as a way of anticipating and being receptive to whatever might occur. Even prior to meeting the interviewee, several of the participants described how they reflected upon his or her potential

state and condition, and how this could set the tone for their approach. Several of the participants also expressed how they prepared for the emotional experiences they might encounter, both with regard to the feelings of the interviewee, but also their own emotional reactions. One participant described how he prepared himself emotionally for working on the Utøya case and how he wanted to contribute to the interviewees' experiences of safety:

I tried to prepare myself emotionally and think this is my job; I should get the account and ensure that they feel the safety I talked about earlier. They come here and testify and...yeah, preparing the ground for them. (Participant 8)

In many of the interviews, the participants emphasized the importance of establishing a personal openness to the interviewee and not being (too) influenced by prior knowledge. For example, by not being influenced by prejudice or preconceived notions, as described by a participant in the following dialogue:

Participant: So I'm thinking it's... there's a fine line between the fact that you have to know a little bit, and at the same time it's bad if you know too much about the person you're going to interview.

Interviewer: To be preconceived?

Participant: Yes, there's the risk of that. (Participant 2)

Another participant highlights that obtaining this balance between openness and prior knowledge sometimes can be a challenge:

... We police are not supposed to be prejudiced but we get influenced by what we first see, you know, pictures of the person we're about to meet, the telephone, and how they look and how they act. (Participant 8)

3.2 Using first impressions, casual conversation and communicating expectations to make the interviewee comfortable

An important theme in the interviews was how the participants described different interpersonal approaches to safeguarding the interviewee as ways of building rapport. Creating a safe relational context was described through different ways of the investigator adapting to and engaging in the interview relationship, from their initial interaction with the interviewee and throughout the interview. Many of the participants described ways in which they tried to be attentive, caring, and supportive prior to the interview. For example, most of the participants expressed that they preferred to have their first communication with the interviewee by telephone rather than sending them a letter. The phone call was meant to help them to get a feel for the interviewee, was considered to be more thoughtful, and was easier for clarifying ambiguities and contributing to the interviewees' sense of safety and predictability.

The first physical meeting between the interviewer and interviewee was an explicit arena where rapport should develop. Most of the participants described how they emphasized the first impression they would like to give, such as through being neutrally dressed, giving a professional impression, and being friendly. Several of the participants were explicit in expressing attitudes, including being open and showing an interest in the interviewees, that they were being listened to, and that they were being treated with respect. Furthermore, many of the participants described engaging in an informal or casual conversation about trivial or neutral topics as a beneficial way of initiating rapport. Alternatively, as described by several participants, by a strategic use of self-disclosure or, when appropriate, humour. Casual conversation was considered an approach to reduce social tension and get the communication process running, laying the ground for further development of rapport.

Another way to enhance feelings of safety and reducing potential distress, according to many of the participants, is to orientate the interviewee about what is going to happen to increase predictability concerning the process. Providing information about contextual matters may include the background for the interview; clarification of roles, rights, and regulations; describing the physical aspects of the interview room; describing the interview process; or how the interview will be documented. Preconceptions concerning contextual issues may include issues that occupy the interviewee and are thus clarified, demonstrating how a verbal orientation can provide an opportunity to reduce feelings of uncertainty, anxiety, and unpredictability. Most of the participants described that communicating to the interviewees about the process as a very useful approach for generating information and making the interviewee feel more comfortable. This was described by a participant:

Yes, I tell them about the process, and what an investigative interview is about. ‘Okay, now we’re going to do this...’ so that they can picture the different phases, so that they know what they will be going through, and immediately their shoulders go down. (Participant 13)

Several of the participants also described preparing the interviewee for possible negative emotions by telling him or her that the dialogue may touch upon areas that could be perceived as distressing, unpleasant, or difficult due to the topic of conversation or the requested level of detail, as described by one participant:

I always try... before we get to the account, especially in situations like this, where there are feelings, strong feelings, I try to prepare them that there will be unpleasant, hurtful questions. Er... so that they’re prepared for that. (Participant 3)

3.3 Getting closer to the experience of the interviewee through engagement, adaptation and understanding

In addition to encouraging the interviewee to give a detailed narrative and use their own words, the participants described that they continuously tried to adapt to the expressions of the interviewee, which can be vital when working with individuals in different states and of different ages. Most of the participants described how they employed a variety of communication techniques during interviews, such as active listening, the use of silence, and different ways to ask questions to adapt to the level of language of the interviewee. Most of the participants described how they interpret interviewees' verbal and non-verbal expressions to aid further understanding. This is described from the perspective of one participant:

I read facial expressions, body language, gestures, the way he or she approaches me and try to... show empathy, to make the person feel safe in the situation and say 'I'm here for you, now the two of us are going to talk together.' (Participant 19)

Many participants described how showing attentiveness and engagement in the interview relationship can lead to a greater understanding, making it easier to adapt to the interviewee. For instance, several of the participants described the importance of expressing an understanding for the potential needs of the interviewee. Practical needs may include taking into consideration the interviewee's schedule, his or her need for food or something to drink, to smoke a cigarette, or to take breaks during the interview. From a psychological perspective, this may also involve the need for someone who listens, understands, and acknowledges the interviewee.

3.4 Handling negative feelings and being receptive in the interview relationship

To acknowledge emotional needs, several of the participants emphasized reducing elements that could potentially harm communication flow, such as allowing a person to take breaks when feelings became difficult to handle. Many of the participants also described how they often acknowledged the interviewee's feelings. For example, by showing attentiveness through summaries, or, by articulating an understanding of the interviewee's feelings as described from the experience of the following participant:

...if there are tears, for instance, you can respond to them by saying 'Now I can see tears in your eyes', right, so that they can feel that they're being acknowledged. I think they like that. (Participant 16)

Interviewing a traumatized person may entail a relationship that can tolerate feelings of distress, pain, and shame, or other feelings that may present obstacles to maintaining rapport. To approach such feelings, the investigator should express support and acceptance to ease discomfort and help the interviewee continue to talk. For example, one participant described how he approached difficult emotions and silence in the Utøya interviews:

And if things go silent, there's a limit to how long that can last. It's hard sometimes, it shouldn't become awkward either. But then I might say 'What happened next?' and just help them a little bit. Then I'm close to them, right. I'm much like... I'm there for them. (Participant 16)

The interview relationship also includes the interviewer's feelings, which may influence their presence and approach, and the interviewee's perceptions of the relationship. Several participants described how self-disclosure of their own feelings could contribute to strengthening the relational bond with the interviewee. The investigator's emotional experience of listening to the interviewee's narrative was described as a pathway to achieving

greater understanding in the relationship. For instance, one participant described how, when working on the Utøya case, his involvement in the interviewee's story could help him find the 'good questions':

... I put myself into the situation of the interviewee. It's obvious that if I went into the material that he told me, and I did because I like to take part in the story to find the good questions, and then... I probably would've peed my pants if I was the one standing there. (Participant 11)

4. Discussion

This study examined two research questions; what do the police interviewers consider important and useful to (1) facilitate an atmosphere of safety, and, (2) establish and maintain rapport with a traumatized interviewee? Even though there is an obvious overlap in how the themes in the findings relate to each of these questions, the first and second theme predominantly relate to the first research question, whilst the third and fourth theme is mainly connected to the second. Figure 1 below shows a visual summary of these themes with regard to the different phases of developing and maintaining rapport in police interviews of traumatized interviewees.

INSERT FIGURE 1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS ABOUT HERE

Figure 1. Summary of findings.

Investigative interviewing guidelines sometimes limit rapport-building to a certain phase of the interview, the findings from this study, however, show how the participants

approaches the interviewee in different ways in different stages of the interview in order to build rapport. This supports the notion that rapport should be considered a dynamic state that can change over the course of an interaction and is important throughout the interview process (Abbe & Brandon, 2013; Fogarty, Augoustinos, & Kettler, 2013; Ord, Shaw, & Green, 2011; Vanderhallen & Vervaeke, 2014; Walsh & Bull, 2012).

How did the police interviewers describe their approach to traumatized interviewees? An important theme in these findings was the participants' descriptions of their preparations for developing rapport with, and a safe atmosphere for, the interviewees. The ways the participants describe preparing are in many respects in accord with best practice guidelines for interviewing. For instance, through emphasising openness or obtaining a balanced knowledge of the case and the interviewee: "In a general sense, they need to know as much as is possible in the circumstances about the witness and a little about the alleged offence and information important to the investigation" (UK Ministry of Justice, 2011, p. 13). However, when interviewing traumatized interviewees, the participants also highlighted the importance of preparing emotionally as a valuable pathway to reducing potential stress when feelings arose in the investigative interview.

To build rapport the participants described their experiences with significant social and communicative factors to make the interviewee feel safe and comfortable, which, according to research, are essential factors for developing good rapport (Collins et al., 2002; Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2011). When building rapport the participants described the importance of previewing the interview to reduce interviewees' uncertainty about the process and to modify potential negative assumptions (e.g. to negate stereotypical thinking about what a police interview is about). To further the interviewees' experience of trust and safety and,

thus, facilitate rapport, the participants described the importance of continually showing understanding for and adapting to the expressions of the interviewee. This corresponds with other research on the Utøya investigative interviews which described different ways the police interviewers showed support to the victims during the interview (Jakobsen et al., 2016), and, how factors like empathic police officers and being able to provide a coherent narrative contributed to a positive interview experience (Langballe & Schultz, 2017). Even though empathy has not been clearly defined in investigative interviewing (Oxburgh & Ost, 2011), which makes it challenging to know when it is occurring, it is still considered important for the development of rapport (Dando & Oxburgh, 2016; Holmberg, 2004a; Madsen & Holmberg, 2015; Vanderhallen & Vervaeke, 2014).

To facilitate communication when interviewing traumatized interviewees, it may require that the investigator manage the interviewees' distress or painful emotions at different stages of the interview. This was particularly emphasized in the theme 'handling negative feelings and being receptive in the interview relationship'. Even though managing emotions is not emphasized in the participants' training, the findings highlight that they regard it as important to appraise and in different ways accommodate the emotional state of interviewees' in order to enhance rapport. For instance, by showing acknowledgement and support if the interviewee is experiencing sadness or distress.

The experience of emotions in investigative interviews has only to a certain extent been touched upon in the forensic literature. For example, by recommending the police interviewer to show empathy and understanding for the feelings of the interviewee, or, to help the interviewee to control anxiety or arousal (Fisher & Geiselman, 1992, 2010; Fisher, Milne, & Bull, 2011; Fisher, Ross, & Cahill, 2010). Nonetheless, the findings of this study brings us

closer to describing the when and how of approaching emotions in police interviews. If we consider the emotional aspects of the investigative interview, the findings show how the police interviewers considered it important to: 1) emotionally prepare for the interview, 2) initially engage in social/communicative approaches that make the interviewee feel comfortable, 3) preview the interview structure and format to clarify expectations, reduce uncertainty and enhance predictability, 4) prepare the interviewee for the fact that difficult emotions may occur, and 5) appraise the state of the interviewee to accommodate and respond appropriately to psychological needs throughout the interview process.

4.1 Reflexivity and limitations

Reflexivity is a way of relating to the research process through continuously reflecting upon the phenomena under study and how it is influenced by subjective and intersubjective interpretative elements. The reflexive activity of the researcher provides an opportunity to understand how his or her own experiences and understanding of the world influence the research process (Morrow, 2005). In this respect, reflexivity can be used to monitor and audit the research process to increase trustworthiness of the study (Binder et al., 2012; Finlay, 2003). From collecting the data and through the analysis leading to the findings, we have aimed to be transparent and self-critical to how we approached and interpreted the material.

In the research process, some aspects of the participants' experience will be easily recognizable, whilst other parts will not be that accessible. The ways subjectivity may influence the development and interpretation of the material shows how our conceptual background both enable and limits our understanding (Finlay, 2003). For instance, our clinical backgrounds may have inclined us to navigating the generation and interpretation of data in a

particular direction, such as by prioritizing relational approaches to regulating distress more than contextual matters (e.g. the use of special measures). This shows the importance of acknowledging how our backgrounds and preconceptions may limit our perspective on the research process and that others may have interpreted the data in another direction. For instance, a sociologist or linguist may have prioritized differently or interpreted the material using other concepts and, thus, provided other views.

Qualitative interviews often encounter the challenge of subjectivity and double hermeneutics in that the researcher interprets situations in which the participants are already involved in interpretations of the same situation (Stige et al., 2009). When a researcher interviews someone about how they interview others, it means the researcher is interpreting the participants' experience influenced by his/her preconceptions and interpretations. With several layers of interpretation, one could argue that an emphasis on subjectivity and the interpretative elements creates a bias or a distance to an objective description of what actually happened. On the other hand, we acknowledge how reflexivity through multiple perspectives can contribute to a more nuanced exploration of rapport in ways that generate new knowledge that can move us beyond our previous understanding. For instance, even though interviewing traumatized interviewees have not been emphasized in the participants' training, the analysis of the material provided us with descriptions of different approaches to facilitating communication with this group (e.g., by accommodating and responding to different emotional reactions throughout the interview process). This contributed to further our understanding of rapport in the context of investigative interviews of traumatized interviewees.

However, an obvious limitation of the study is the timing of the research interviews,

which were conducted in 2013. When interviewing participants over a year after the investigative interviews took place, one could question how their memory could have been influenced. For instance, with regard issues like to social desirability (Ponsaers, Mulkers and Stoop; 2001, in Clément, van den Plas, van den Eshof, & Nierop, 2009). In addition, the study was based on an exploration of the investigators' beliefs concerning what happened and the degree to which the material can be said to be a reflection of what actually happened is open for discussion. It should also be noted that research has shown that investigators' beliefs concerning investigative interviewing do not always necessarily correspond to their practices (Walsh & Bull, 2011).

The participants in the study were responsible for carrying out approximately 30% of all the Utøya interviews, which was considered a fairly good coverage with regard to generalizing findings to the police interviews in this particular case. However, the sampling employed a purposeful approach in recruiting participants, so we do not know how many chose not to participate. This may have created a limitation or a sample bias. For instance, participating in the project may have appealed more to the investigators who had satisfactory perceptions of their own efforts in the Utøya interviews. A related limitation is the fact that it focused on such an extraordinary event as Utøya, which makes it unclear how broadly these findings can be transferred or generalized to the everyday work of police investigators. Even so, from our point of view, we considered the sample of the study to be appropriate for the task of describing experiences of, and perspectives on, rapport and emotional processes in investigative interviewing.

4.2 Implications for future research

Previous theory and research have rightly highlighted the importance of social and communicative aspects of rapport. However, when interviewing traumatized persons the findings of this study, emphasizing the police interviewers' perspectives and beliefs, showed the importance of working on an emotional level to build rapport and promote the well-being of the interviewee. This notion opens many questions for future research. Can our findings be supported by video analysis or quantitative measures? What occurs in the process of building rapport from the interviewees' point of view? How does managing emotions specifically influence interview outcomes? Can any police investigator conduct a good interview with a traumatized interviewee? More research on police interviews of traumatized interviewees is needed to systematize and integrate working with affective dimensions into established models of investigative interviewing.

5. Conclusion

We examined the views of police investigators on the topic of rapport in the investigative interviews of victims that followed the Utøya Island massacre in 2011. When interviewing traumatized interviewees, the findings show that the police interviewers regard being well prepared as an important premise for the interview process. To build rapport, the participants of the study underline the importance of being flexible and adaptive to the state and expressions of the interviewee. In the process, the findings emphasize the significance of the police interviewer being able to appraise and manage the emotional reactions of the interviewee to promote feelings of safety and enhance communication. Thus, for the practise of interviewing traumatized individuals, the findings highlight the importance of police

interviewers being able to accommodate the emotional state of the interviewee to facilitate rapport and achieve investigative aims.

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Figure 1 Summary of findings

